

you not only on what page each mention will be found, but also what is the subject of the mention on each page'. An index 'should enable a reader, first, to find readily the place where the author has said a particular thing, and, secondly, it should enable him to find all that the book has said on a particular subject'. 'The maker of an index to another man's work must be impartial.' These are standards that should by now be commonplace; and it is perhaps saddening to find that today's indexers are still fighting the battles of 80 or more years ago – 'How seldom it is in modern books,' Cook writes, 'that the name of the index-maker is given!'

The essay concludes with a quotation from Ruskin himself on the art of the index: 'It is easy enough to make an index, as it is to make a broom of odds and ends, as rough as oat straw; but to make an index tied up tight, and that will sweep well into corners, isn't so easy.'

## Acknowledgement

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## Notes and references

- 1 London: Macmillan, pp. 55–76. The essay is quoted by Robert L. Collison in his *Indexes and indexing* (London, 4th edn 1972), p. 25, and described (in an understatement) by Collison as 'a lively defence of the art'. Norman Knight also quotes the essay in his *Indexing, the art of* (London, 1979), p. 29.
- 2 *The Irish Land Act, 1881* (1882), *Britain and Turkey* (1914), *How Britain strove for peace* (1914), *Why Britain is at war* (1914).
- 3 Edmund Garrett (1909), *The life of John Ruskin* (1911), *The life of Florence Nightingale* (1914) and *Delane of the Times* (1915).
- 4 Cook, Emily C. *London and environs* (1897), 5th edn 1909.
- 5 Mills, J. Saxon. *Sir Edward Cook: a biography*. London, 1921.
- 6 Thornton, James. 'Cook and Wedderburn's index to Ruskin's Works.' *The Indexer* 5(4), 154–8.
- 7 Wheatley, Henry B. *How to make an index*. London, 1902.

# The art of indexing

## Edward Cook

A servant with this clause  
Makes drudgery divine:  
Who sweeps a room as for thy laws  
Makes that and th' action fine.

There is no book (in the category of general literature) so good that it is not made better by an index, and no book so bad that it may not by this adjunct escape the worst condemnation. Carlyle, the foe of Dryasdust, reserved his heaviest fire for those members of the species who had not even the decency to index themselves. He gives a list of books at the beginning of his *Cromwell*: 'Enormous folios, these and many others have been printed, and some of them again printed, but never yet edited – edited as you edit wagon-loads of broken bricks and dry mortar, simply by tumbling up the wagon. Not one of those monstrous old volumes has so much as an available Index!' And again at the beginning of his *Friedrich*:

Books born mostly of Chaos, which want all things, even an index, are a painful object .... The Prussian Dryasdust, otherwise an honest fellow and not afraid of labour, excels all other Dryasdusts yet known .... He writes big books wanting in almost every quality; and does not even give an Index to them. Enough: he could do no other: I have striven to forgive him.

The strife was hard and not, I imagine, successful, for Carlyle is credited with the saying that a publisher who issues a book without an index should be hanged. The Roxburghe Club, thinking that trial should precede execution, proposed that the omission of an Index, 'when essential,' should be an indictable offence, and Lord Campbell, in a more practical

spirit, proposed that in such a case an author should be deprived of copyright. In spite of such fulminations, authors and publishers continually offend, and even when an index is given it is too often done in a perfunctory and slovenly manner. 'A dreary book crowned by a barren index,' says Lord Rosebery of Forsyth's *Captivity of Napoleon at St Helena*, writing as one who had barely survived 'the hideous task' of reading his way through those 'indigestible' and massive three volumes. The fact is that the importance of the art of indexing is little understood. Many people do not even know that it is an art at all.

Two classes of books in particular should always have a good index – the best books and the most unreadable books. The best books, because there is so much in them that a reader will want to find again; the worst books, because lacking an index they are without any reason for existing at all. Take, for instance, the Parliamentary Debates. No man of sense reads them for pleasure. They are valuable only for reference, and a book of reference without a complete index is almost a contradiction in terms. For many years *Hansard* was indexed as badly as could be. It is now much better done, because the entries are fuller and more numerous.

Should even a novel have an index? There is high authority for answering, as the parliamentarians say, in the affirmative. Dr Johnson, in writing to Mr Richardson about *Clarissa Harlowe*, said:

I wish you would add an index rerum, that when the reader recollects any incident, he may easily find it, which at present he cannot do, unless he knows in which volume it is told; for *Clarissa* is not a performance to be read with eagerness, and laid aside for ever; but will be occasionally consulted by the busy, the aged, and the studious;

and therefore I beg that this edition, by which I suppose posterity is to abide, may want nothing that can facilitate its use.

The egregious Mr. Croker has it that Johnson's proposition was so absurd that it can only be ascribed to a desire on his part to minister to Richardson's vanity. But not every one is, like Lord Macaulay, a walking index to *Clarissa*, who, it should be remembered, is in seven or even eight volumes, and there is a great deal to be said for Johnson's suggestion. A biography cannot be considered complete without an index. Why not also a novel? The great characters of fiction are much more worthy of memory, and do in fact live much longer, than the subjects of most biographies. 'For the life after death,' says Samuel Butler of Hamlet, Don Quixote, Mr Pickwick and some others, 'it is not necessary that a man or a woman should have lived.'<sup>1</sup> It must, however, be admitted that for a novelist still alive to furnish his books with an index would be a dangerous presumption. Richardson might have carried it off, for his Pamela and Clarissa went forth conquering and to conquer, but hardly another could so venture. When time has set its seal on a novelist's work comes the day for an index. The *Dickens Dictionary* and the *Key to the Waverley Novels* have deserved well of two or three generations of readers already.

If it be a sin to put out any good book without adding an index, still more is he to be condemned who edits the Collected Works of a good author without doing so. The more voluminous and the more miscellaneous the author, the greater is the need of a full and analytical index. Carlyle had this service done to his Works during his life; Ruskin has had it done to his after his death, for though he sometimes nibbled at undertaking the task himself he lacked time to fulfil it. He knew the need acutely. 'I have left the system of my teaching widely scattered and broken,' he lamented. 'Alphabetical indices,' he says elsewhere, 'will be of little use unless another and a very different kind of index be arranged in the mind of the reader,' and he proceeded to analyse the contents of one of his books in logical sequence. This is what the elaborate Index at the end of the Library Edition aimed at doing for the whole body of his writings.

'The work of Ruskin,' says a French expositor, 'is a forest where paths and branches cross each other without end.' 'One must feel,' says another critic, 'that true justice would only be done to the works of Ruskin if with infinite labour some sympathetic and congenial spirit possessed of much sobriety and system were to arrange the whole of the works and to distribute passages taken from them all under new heads, with a simple, intelligible, and orderly classification.' Of these requirements, the infinite labour was forthcoming; and with the Index just mentioned in hand, any reader of Ruskin has the means of doing the thing for himself.

There are other modern writers in whose case the need is not so sore, but yet is felt. Take Matthew Arnold, for instance. He was discursive; he touched many subjects lightly, he leapt (as Mr Birrell has it) from bough to bough, and he often returned to the same bough in different books. If you want to know all that he had to say in defining the essence of poetry or in description of the grand style, you



Sir Edward Tyas Cooke, caricature which appeared in *Vanity Fair*, 1899, sourced from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward\\_Tyas\\_Cook](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Tyas_Cook)

have to collate passages scattered in many different essays, and there is no index to help you in the search.

The late Lord Coleridge, in a Prefatory Note to the second series of *Essays in Criticism*, says that Arnold intended to write something more about Shelley. Lord Coleridge added, what is very true, that 'in order to gather the mind of Mr Arnold on the whole of any subject it is necessary to read more than one paper, because in each paper he frequently deals with one aspect of a subject only, which requires for sound and complete judgment to be supplemented or completed by another. It is especially necessary to bear this in mind in reading what has become his last utterance on Shelley.' Yet the editor of his complete works gives us no index at all.

Another book which badly wants indexing is Froude's ever-delightful *Short Studies on Great Subjects* in four volumes. I have often thought that the money spent in producing Editions de Luxe is all very well, but necessities should come before luxury, and an index is a necessary. I have even wondered whether some of those who have

edited modern authors would not have done better service by indexing than by 'introducing' them.

A friend of Francis Douce, the antiquary, had a curse of his own for those who sent out a book without an index where one was obviously wanted. He damned them 'ten miles beyond Hell.' For my part I think that simple damnation is enough in the case of a single book, and that the extra ten miles of Douce's friend might be reserved for those who collect an author's works without indexing them.

A specious defence against indexes has sometimes been made out of the argument that every one ought to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest a book as he goes along, that therein he makes an index for himself, and that if he finds it ready-made he is spared this wholesome discipline. Public men, when they address Institutes or Students' Unions, make much of various mechanical aids to serious reading. We are told how Sir William Hamilton used to make an abstract of a book as he went along, distinguishing different groups of subjects by different coloured inks; or how Gibbon, reversing the process, made an abstract before he read a book of what he expected to find therein, subsequently noting any new points; or how Horne Tooke made notes of books on visiting-cards, slipped them through a slit into his desk – 'put it into the post-office' was his phrase – and afterwards sorted them out for reference. And so forth and so forth.

It is quite true that no printed index is likely to fill the same place as these private aids to memory. But that is no reason why the printed index should not first be supplied. It is intolerable presumption on the part of an author to suggest that his words are too precious, too worthy of being learnt by heart, for an index to be given. Thomas Fuller long ago disposed of such pretence in a passage of sound sense and quaint humour:

An Index is a necessary implement, and no impediment of a book, except in the same sense wherein the carriages of an army are termed impedimenta. Without this, a large author is but a labyrinth without a clue to direct the reader therein. I confess there is a lazy kind of learning which is only indical; when scholars (like adders which only bite the horse's heels) nibble but at the tables, which are caices librerum, neglecting the body of the book. But though the idle deserve no crutches (let not a staff be used by them, but on them), pity it is the weary should be denied the benefit thereof, and industrious scholars prohibited the accommodation of an index, most used by those who most pretend to condemn it.

Let it be granted, then, that every book which is worth anything should have a good index. But 'what is a good index? There is much ignorance on this point, and many indexes are skimble-skamble performances. Take such a simple thing as an index to a poet's poems. The other day I wanted to refer to Tennyson's two translations from the *Iliad*, and turned for quick help, as I supposed, to the 'Index to the Poems'; but the help was not forthcoming, for only one of the pieces was indexed under 'Iliad,' the other appearing under 'Achilles.' The maker of that index worked without brains.

But we shall better be able to discuss errors in indexing if we start from first principles. An index is meant to be a pointer and to serve as a time-saving machine. It should enable a reader, first, to find readily the place where the author has said a particular thing, and, secondly, it should enable him to find all that the book has said on a particular subject.

In applying these principles, I lay down as the first rule, One book One index. It was once a custom to have several indexes to one book, in order, I suppose, not to mix up titles incongruously. There would, for instance, be an index of persons and places, a second of subjects, a third of words, and so forth. The practice was common in editions of the classics, and the Latin phrases were often used in English books – *index locorum, rerum, verborum*, and so forth. Such multiplication of indexes is an unmitigated nuisance. It makes reference less easy. One index alphabetically arranged is the only right plan.

But what should be included in the index? How many and what kind of titles should there be? Macaulay has a saying on this subject from which I must take liberty to dissent strongly:

'I am very unwilling,' he wrote to his publisher, 'to seem captious about such a work as an index. By all means let Mr — go on. But offer him with all delicacy and courtesy from me this suggestion. I would advise him to have very few heads except proper names. A few there must be, such as Convocation, Nonjurors, Bank of England, National Debt. These are heads to which readers who wish for information on such those subjects will naturally turn. But I think that Mr — will on consideration perceive that such heads as Priestcraft, Priesthood, Party Spirit, Insurrection, War, Bible, Crown, Controversies, Dissent, are quite useless. Nobody will ever look at them; and if every passage in which party-spirit, dissent, the art of war and the power of the Crown are mentioned is to be noticed in the Index, the size of the volumes will be doubled. The best rule is to keep close to proper names, and never to deviate from that rule without some special occasion.'

This may be a good rule in the case of a history, and proper names are what should always be included in an index whatever else be omitted. In the case of Macaulay's own History his rule is the more appropriate because the work is stronger in its personal sketches and in appeal to the imagination than in discussion of general problems. But Macaulay had interesting things to say on many subjects, and Mr —, to the great advantage of Macaulay's readers, did not confine himself to the few general heads for which he had the author's express permission. 'Nobody will ever look for them,' said Macaulay of this and that suggested title; but how could he tell?

Lord Rosebery in a speech a few years ago foresaw a day when the world itself could not contain the books that should be written: libraries would cover all the ground, and the only help was, he suggested, a periodical bonfire. He forgot, by the way, that this is the age of tubes. Space may be extended downwards, and the underground store-rooms

of the Bodleian Library at Oxford have provided accommodation for ages to come. It is a chastening thought for all literary men that, bonfire or no bonfire, most of what is written today will be as dead a hundred years hence as though it had never been. But who can say today what will be wholly valueless then? Nobody can.

The scientific world has been all agog with Mendelism. The new 'ism' is revolutionising biology, and if the biologists have their way it may revolutionise politics and social reform. But what was the origin of Mendelism? Where was the sacred script found? It was a stray article which lay ignored for thirty-five years in an obscure periodical, just the sort of thing that a hustling librarian might have turned out as fodder for Lord Rosebery's bonfire.

An index-maker, then, should have no prejudices or partialities, and every subject on which he finds any substantial discussion in the book should be included in the index. He is working for an unknown future and for readers whose tastes and interests he cannot know. Of course, in making an index exhaustive, he must use some discrimination. Opie's answer to the man who asked how he mixed his colours – 'With brains' – is applicable to all arts and crafts, however humble.

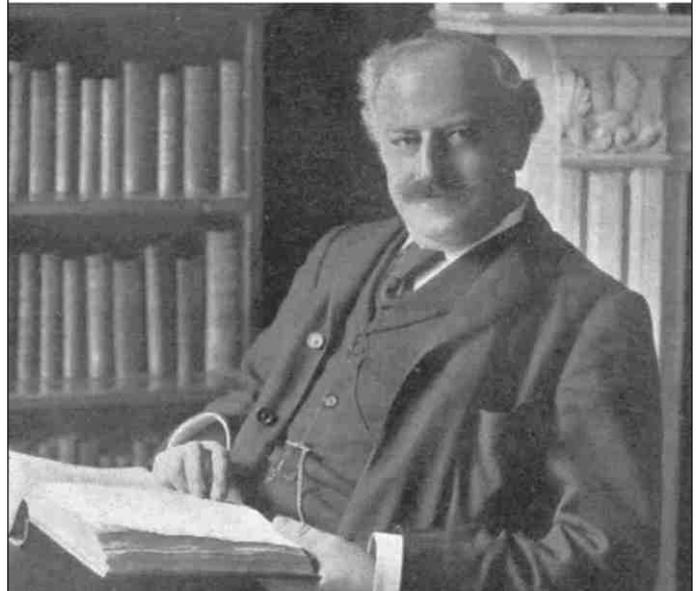
A good index, then, will have a great many titles. Double entries are sometimes advisable if an index is to be adapted to ready reference. I agree with the writer who said that 'time is of more value than type and the wear and tear of temper than an extra page of index.' Take, for instance, the case of *Hansard* already mentioned. A speech should be indexed under the speaker's name, but also under its main subject. Every indexer must have certain rules before him, but he will do well not to follow them slavishly. In the construction of an index there are cases when it is necessary to do, as some architects have to be told, and make a sacrifice of symmetry to convenience. The one thought which an indexer should never forget is how best to save the time of those for whom he is working.

Next, how are the entries under any given head to be arranged? Wrong answers to this question cover most of the vices which an index can exhibit. The most frequent and the most heinous is the practice of following a subject-heading by long strings of page numbers without any indication of what you will find on the several pages. This is to fob you off with an index which is no index. Of course, if the references to a particular person or subject are few or unimportant, a simple reference to the pages may be excused; but when they are many and varied, an index of that kind sets you, if you are in search of a particular passage, to look for a needle in a bundle of hay.

Some indexers know that this will not do, but they weary in doing better, and, after sorting out a certain number of the references, fall back into simple numbers under the sub-heading 'Otherwise mentioned.' Here, again, there is sometimes reasonable excuse for the practice: it is a sound plan to preserve proportion and to distinguish between substantial references and mere passing allusions: the latter may rightly be lumped together under 'Otherwise mentioned.' On the other hand, it is very tiresome to find, after long search, that an important reference is concealed under that head

## Edward Tyas Cook

*Works*



The Perfect Library

Lord Morley's *Life of Gladstone* is furnished with an admirable index, as was meet and right in a work which, besides its other merits, is a most valuable book of political reference. I remembered that somewhere there was record of Mr Gladstone's attitude towards Mr Chamberlain at the opening of the Irish controversy in 1885. The references to Mr Chamberlain are for the most part clearly distinguished in the index, but the particular passage which I had in mind only disclosed itself after search among the 'other mentions' (iii. 191).

Where, then, a book contains many mentions of a person or a subject, the indexer must analyse them and tell you not only on what page each mention will be found, but also what is the subject of the mention on each page. This is the most difficult and least mechanical part of an indexer's work. If the reader thinks that anybody can do it, let him try his hand and he will learn better. It needs much time, thought, and judgment to seize the true sense of a passage, to decide what description will best facilitate reference, and then to make the entry with the concision required in an index.

Nearly as bad as an index which omits a proper reference is one which gives you a blind reference. The classical instance in this sort is alleged to occur in a law book:

Best, Mr. Justice, his great mind, p. 101

On turning to the page one is supposed to have found the

statement that ‘Mr. Justice Best said he had a great mind to commit the man for trial.’ I believe that the entry has never been traced to any authentic source, but it serves as an example of how not to do it. If the entry does really exist, it may have been the jest of a bored or spiteful indexer, and this possibility suggests a further point. The maker of an index to another man’s work must be impartial. His business is to be a sign-post, not a critic.

Mr Wheatley in his exhaustive monograph has given instances of the way in which in the eighteenth century the index was sometimes used as an instrument of party propaganda. Thus William Bromley had published a platitudinous book of Travels, and his Whig opponents put out as an election squib an index in which all his most platitudinous passages were collected; as, for instance:

BOULOGNE, the first city on the French shore, lies on the coast, p. 2

FEBRUARY, an ill season to see a garden in, p. 53

The squib missed fire, for Bromley was returned and was elected Speaker. It must be attributed to the intellectual arrogance of the Whigs that an addiction to platitude was thought likely to count against a parliamentarian. Still, Macaulay who knew all these things may well have said (as reported) to his publisher, ‘Let no damned Tory index my History.’

We may now suppose our indexer to have read through the book. He has the stock of slips on which the purport of each passage which he intends to index is indicated. He has sorted them out under proper names or subjects. How is he to arrange the entries under each heading? It is at this stage, as it seems to me, that most indexers go wrong. The plan generally adopted is to arrange the entries in the order in which the passages indicated by them occur in the book. Now if the author is a very methodical and orderly writer, if you know the order in which he treats his subjects, if you remember roughly whereabouts in a book or a volume a passage occurs, such an index may serve you. But it is seldom that these conditions exist, and if they do not, the index compiled on the assumption that they do will serve you very badly.

An instance will make the point clear. The indexes and summaries which are supplied to Carlyle’s complete works were, it is believed, the work in main of his neighbour and volunteer assistant, Mr Henry Larkin, who ‘helped me,’ says Carlyle, ‘in a way not to be surpassed for completeness, ingenuity, patience, exactitude, and total and continual absence of fuss.’ ‘You wanted work,’ said Carlyle to him, ‘and you are likely to get it.’ This can well be believed, for Mr Larkin had first volunteered his services when *Friedrich* was in progress. The indexes to that book and to Carlyle’s works generally are well done, but in one respect they are deficient. The index to *Friedrich* contains under his name 21 half-columns of close print. The entries give well enough the subject of each reference, but they are not sorted out under any sub-heads, being arranged, irrespective of subject, in the order in which they occur in the seven volumes. The index is hopeless and helpless if you want to find readily where Carlyle

reports a particular saying or to trace the author’s scattered references to the gifts or character of his hero.

Of course, where the essence of the matter is chronological and the book itself is so arranged, the arrangement of index entries in a corresponding order may serve, but even so a certain amount of subdivision is desirable. With this proviso I should lay down two rules: in every long heading in an index there should be sub-headings, and the order of arrangement under each should be alphabetical. The observance of these rules greatly adds to the labour of the indexer, but it also greatly helps facility of reference.

It is impossible to carry general rules much further. The number and kind of sub-heads must depend on the nature and volume of the matter in hand. But a few hints, suggested by common mistakes in indexes, may be offered. In the case of entries dealing with persons it is clearly desirable to separate general references from those which deal with particular books, speeches, letters, or whatever else they may be. In the case of a voluminous writer, it may often be helpful to divide his references to general subjects into (1) leading ideas and principal passages, and (2) general references. In the case of (2), entries should be alphabetical, but in the case of (1), the order may well be explanatory and logical.

Who should make the index? In old days an author generally did the work himself, and Bayle cites with approval the whimsical remark attributed to a Spanish bibliographer that the index of a book should be made by the author even if the book itself were written by someone else. Certainly there is a flavour about an index made by an author himself, especially if he is a humorist, which is lacking from others. One shares the chuckle which Lowell must have enjoyed when he put into the ‘Index to the *Biglow Papers*: ‘Babel, probably the first congress, 164; a gabble-mill, *ib.*’; or Ruskin, when in an index which he began for his hotchpotch called *Fors Clavigera* he wrote down: ‘Parliamentary talk, a watchman’s rattle sprung by constituencies of rascals at sight of an honest man, 37.’<sup>2</sup>

The author of *Erewhon*, too, was fond of indexing or beginning to index his books, and must have enjoyed this entry for a new edition of *Alps and Sanctuaries*: ‘Crossing, efficacy of, 152,’ remembering how the *Tablet* had read his remarks on that subject in a devotional rather than a biological sense. The same author obviously enjoyed himself in making the elaborate index which he added to the second edition of his *Evolution Old and New*, as in this entry referring to one of his pet aversions:

GENIUS, Mr Allen says I am a, 388

There is a serious reason why an author should make his own index, or, if he does not, should let the indexer work at his elbow. There is nothing like making an index for discovering inconsistencies and needless repetitions. Few authors, however, have the patience to make their own indexes, but those who have not should recognise the importance of this adjunct to their work and make due acknowledgment of the collaboration. To do this would tend to establish indexing as one of the minor literary arts.

There was a time when indexers had a certain status.

Macaulay gives them a place, albeit the last, in the press which occurred to get near the chair where Dryden sat at Will's coffee-house. 'There were Earls in stars and garters, clergymen in cassocks and bands, sheepish lads from the universities, translators and indexmakers in ragged coats of frieze.' It is better to have your ragged coat noticed than not to be noticed at all. How seldom it is in modern books that the name of the index-maker is given! I should like to believe that whenever nothing is stated to the contrary the author has made the index himself. But a bitter cry which I read a few years ago in *The Book Monthly* makes this belief difficult. 'Why is it,' asked the writer,

that the erector of sign-posts through copious volumes gets so little public recognition? Those useful pages have involved much reading, skill, judgment in the marshalling of scattered references into orderly companies. 'Index by So-and-so' in the forefront of a book would be at least as reasonable as 'Wigs by Thingummy' on the programme of Hamlet.

What, it may be asked, is the proper scale of an index? No general answer can be given. The scale must be governed by considerations which differ with the nature of each individual book or author. I have had the curiosity to measure some of the ample indexes mentioned in this paper. Carlyle's index-scale is, roughly, as 1 to 36. Ruskin's *Works* (Library Edition) are in thirty-eight volumes: the index makes a thirty-ninth volume, but its print is very small. The index to Morley's *Life of Gladstone* is on the scale of 1 to 30. The scale of Butler's index to *Evolution Old and New* is as 1 to 17. The record for length of index in proportion to the length of the book was held until the other day by Freeman's *Norman Conquest*: the scale is as 1 to 14, but in this case the print of the index is large.

Lord Morley's *Recollections* has now easily beaten this record. The book itself occupies 760 pages; the index, in small print and double column, 76 – precisely as 1 to 10. Another feature of this index, besides its length, is worth notice. Here and there Lord Morley's index discloses a name or a reference not given in the text: this is often a good plan, as saving a footnote and rewarding the user of an index by a piece of information withheld from a less careful or curious reader.

A perusal of the pages of an index, and even the process of making it, are not dull, dead things. I confess that when I look into a new book, especially if it be one which I have not yet bought, I turn first to the index. If the index be at all full there is no better way of sampling a book. From reviews you never can tell. The reviewer's taste, if he blames, may not be yours. And if he praises and gives you specimens you may find that he has picked out all the plums and that the rest is leather and prunella. An index gives you a taste of the quality at once, which perhaps may be why some authors and publishers are so shy of it. As for index-making, it is very laboursome, especially in the case of editing a book or collected works by some one else, but the work has its alleviations. 'I find index-making,' wrote Ruskin, 'more difficult and tedious than I expected. It is easy enough to make an index, as it is to make a broom of odds and ends, as rough as

oat straw; but to make an index tied up tight, and that will sweep well into corners, isn't so easy.'

It is not easy, but if you persevere you may find the same sort of satisfaction that a good housewife is said to find in a spring-cleaning or a scholar in rearranging his books. Then again an index, if it be adequately full and analytical, brings the compiler and the user into a close relation with the mind, work, and method of the author which is hardly possible in any other way. The satisfaction of finding order evolve itself out of seeming chaos, the pleasure of noting intellectual connections have relieved, I doubt not, many a long day, month, and year of an indexer's otherwise dull labour. Still, when all is said in this sort, the art of indexing is long and tiresome. A master of worldly wisdom gave this among other injunctions to his pupils: 'Never drudge.' The scholar, when trial is made of his patience, acts on a different precept: 'Never grudge.'

## Acknowledgement

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## Notes

- 1 Disraeli had said something like this in his speech at the Royal Literary Fund dinner in 1868: 'Without books those imaginary characters, as they are called, but which are really much more vital and substantial than half our acquaintances, would no longer exist. There would be no Hamlets, no Don Quixotes, no Falstaffs.'
- 2 The humour of the following reference to *Fors Clavigera*, in an index by another hand, was perhaps unconscious. Ruskin had written: 'If you have to obey the whip as a bad hound, because you have no nose, like the members of the present House of Commons, it is a very humble form of menial service indeed.' What an indexer made of the passage was this:

House of Commons, its members have no noses, 28